

# **Uthman bin Affan** ***The Third Caliph of Islam***

*By*

**Abdul Basit Ahmad**

*Edited by*

**Aqeel Walker**

**Muhammad Ayub Sapra**

## Publisher's Note

All praises are due to Allâh, the Lord of all that exists. May Allâh's peace and blessings be upon His final Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, his family and his Companions.

Darussalam is pleased to present this valuable series, '*The Golden Series of the Prophet's Companions*' to the Muslim youth. The purpose of these books is to enlighten our youth about the lives of the greatest heroes of Islam, the Prophet's Companions. Also, we wish to increase the enthusiasm of the Muslim youth for following and adhering to their religion. In this way, these books achieve two very important tasks: educating our youth and encouraging them to be good Muslims.

In this story titled '*Uthman bin 'Affan* – *The Third Caliph of Islam*', is the life story of one of the greatest Muslim Caliphs. He proved to be unique in his generosity to the poor and the needy. He was unique in his bashfulness, modesty and adherence to Islam. At moments of distress, his donations to support the Faith of Islam yielded prospected fruits. No one among the Prophet's Companions could excel him in his financial support of Islam.



In the Name of Allâh,  
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

"Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allâh [i.e., they have gone out for Jihâd (holy fighting), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers]; of them some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e., have been martyred); and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed (i.e., they never proved treacherous to their covenant which they concluded with Allâh) in the least." (33:23)

## Foreword

except Abu Bakr .

He did great things during his rule, especially the collection of the Qur'ân. During his reign, the Islamic State expanded to many nations.

We hope that these books are beneficial to our Muslim youth, as they are the future of Islam. We, at Darussalam realize the importance of good Islamic literature for Muslim children, especially in the West where non-Islamic influences are so strong. For this reason, we feel that the availability of this series will be a valuable aid in instilling a genuine love for Islam in our youth. We would like to thank the author, Mr. Abdul Basit Ahmad, the editors, Mr. Aqeel Walker, and Mr. Muhammad Ayub Sapra for their diligent work in preparing this series. As Allâh says:

"Is there any reward for good other than good?" (55:60)

And our final invocation is that all praises are due to Allâh, the Lord of all that exists.

**Abdul Malik Mujahid**  
General Manager

In the Arabian Peninsula, rich people were a few. Most of the inhabitants of cities were grazing animals or trading with other cities in the civilized world of the time. As for the bedouins of the desert, they were moving from one place to another to find food for their flocks. Their life mainly depended on these animals. Few people in the society of Makkah, were known as rich merchants. However, in relation to society, such riches were not of much use.

Few rich men were exceptions to this rule. However, before the advent of Islam, they were not known to be so generous to the needy. Hence, it is Islam which seeded in them love for charity.

It is really not an easy job to write about a man of the latter type whose virtues and good characteristics are countless and whose generosity is unlimited. Uthman bin Affan , who had the riches of life, both during pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, was not like other men who collected money to enjoy the pleasures of this life. He devoted his life and money to serve the cause

of Islam. Uthman ﷺ came from a very wealthy family, but he was different from other boys of first class families. He could not enjoy the things around him while seeing other people suffering poverty and misery. Therefore, when he grew up, he never missed a chance to help the poor and needy. He led a life of distinctive piety. He always kept himself away from anything that might blemish his morals. He was so bashful that the Prophet ﷺ once said:

“The angels feel shy when they see Uthman.”

He spent the nights praying to Allāh and the days spending his money to satisfy the needs of the poor. It can truly be said that the role of Uthman ﷺ in spreading Islam was very great in that he always spent all his resources in support of Muslims during times of hardships. He had no concern for this world, his only concern was to do things to please Allāh and to serve the religion of Islam.

In this short biography, we are going to read how this great man led the Islamic nation to spread Islam so widely and how he supported the Word of Allāh very sincerely.

**Abdul Basit Ahmad**

## Introduction

### Caliph

Immediately after the Prophet ﷺ passed away, the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ selected a ruler of the Islamic State. The said ruler was named as Caliph meaning “successor” of the Prophet ﷺ. The first Caliph of Islam was our hero Abu Bakr As-Siddique ﷺ. However, before he passed away and after consulting with the senior Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr ﷺ selected ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ as Caliph. In the beginning of his rule, the Muslims called him as the Caliph of the Caliph of the Prophet ﷺ. However, such a designation proved awkward. Therefore, a man suggested calling him the Master of Believers. The following two Caliphs, ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan ﷺ and ‘Ali bin Abi Talib ﷺ were given the same title.

### Emigrants

The emigrants (*Muhajirun*) were the Muslims who believed in the Prophet ﷺ during the period of call to Islam in Makkah and who left this city

to live in Al-Madinah where they built their new state. The period of emigration continued up to the time of the conquest of Makkah. Emigration to Al-Madinah was not only considered a way to escape the oppression of disbelievers but also an act that intimates solidarity with the new nation. Therefore, the Muslims who emigrated before the conquest of Makkah were considered by Allâh as better than those who emigrated after that event. It was an order from Allâh to all believers to gather together in the city of Al-Madinah. These people were praised by Allâh for their dedication and sacrifices for the cause of Islam.

### **Supporters**

The *Ansâr* (supporters) were the Muslim inhabitants of Al-Madinah who offered all they could to help the emigrants resume their life in the new abode. These supporters gave their brother emigrants financial resources, houses and most important of all, protection against their oppressors. The supporters were praised by

Allâh for the help they provided to the Prophet ﷺ and emigrants.

### **Badr Battle**

Badr was a place near to Al-Madinah. The first battle between the Muslims and the disbelievers took place there. The Muslims were not permitted by Allâh to fight the pagans in Makkah because had they fought them, it would have been a disaster for them especially if they killed anyone of the pagans. The principle of revenge would have rendered the Muslims a victim for the stronger pagans and would have changed their direction. However, after emigrating to Al-Madinah, the Muslims had now a state to defend. Hence, they were ordered by Allâh to fight the disbelievers. The battle ended in a great victory for the Muslims although they were one third the number of the pagans with less arms and horses.

### **Uhud Battle**

Uhud is a mountain in north of Al-Madinah.

The Muslims met the pagans there and a fierce battle took place. The archers whom the Prophet ﷺ positioned on a small mount behind the Muslim army to protect them against attacks of pagans from behind, left their positions when they saw the pagan army giving their backs to the Muslims. They wanted to collect war booty against the instructions of the Prophet ﷺ who had already ordered them to stick to their positions. The Muslims received a huge loss and many of the Prophet's Companions were killed including Hamza رضي الله عنه, the Prophet's uncle and Mus'ab bin 'Umair رضي الله عنه, the first ambassador of Islam to Al-Madinah before emigration.

### Ditch Battle

The ditch was dug around the weak points of Al-Madinah to protect the city against the confederates. Salman Al-Farisi رضي الله عنه advised the Muslims to dig the ditch when they were attacked by ten thousand pagans who aimed at destroying the city and the message of Islam.

The battle is also called the Confederates invasion because many allies from all over Arabia gathered to attack Al-Madinah and undermine the message of Islam. There was no actual fighting. The pagans surrounded Al-Madinah for a period of about one month. They were supported by the Jews in spite of the fact that the latter had already made agreements of mutual support with the Muslims. A high wind blew through their tents and forced them to leave with humility.

### Makkah Conquest

After the defeat of the Confederates, the Prophet ﷺ told his Companions that he wished to perform 'Umrah in Makkah. He instructed them that they would march barely armed. When they arrived at a place called Al-Hudaibiyah, the pagans got news of the expedition. They denied the Muslims the right to perform 'Umrah. Negotiations between both parties ended with a truce agreement under which both parties would

stop fighting each other for a period of ten years. However, the pagans did not respect the terms of the agreement. Some pagans raided a Muslim tribe and killed forty men. By this time, the Muslims had become strong enough to take the position of attack rather than defense. The Prophet ﷺ gathered an army of ten thousand soldiers and marched to Makkah. The Muslims did not meet any resistance and conquered the city peacefully. All idols were removed from around the Ka'bah and other places and Islam started a new stage of struggle to raise the Word of Allāh high.



## ***The Son of the Merchant***

### **Background**

Uthman was born to a rich family. His father was a well-known merchant. His trade went as far as Damascus and many other parts of the Arabian Peninsula. His wealthy father provided him with everything to help him lead an easy and happy life. Uthman was brought up the way other children born to high class families were raised. He enjoyed all the things that people from high-class backgrounds enjoyed. Uthman, however, had a personality that could see beyond the riches of this short life. He had good morals. Some of his special characteristics were that he was a very bashful, truthful and generous person. Uthman was still young when his father passed away during a journey to Damascus. This left him in charge of his father's business that he ran very efficiently. The money left to him by his father grew to many folds under his management.

### **Like Father like Son**

Like his father, Uthman became a well-

known trader. However, unlike any other merchant, Uthman spent most of his profits on feeding the poor and the needy. It was because of this characteristic that the people respected him and loved him very much. He would also give his wealth away to the public welfare. He was doing his best to draw a smile on miserable faces. No one other than Abu Bakr رض could excel Uthman in respect of charity and love for the poor and the needy. On many occasions, he spent the major part of his money to equip an army or to provide a facility for Muslims.



## The Light of Islam

Uthman was most of the time traveling either to Damascus or Yemen. During his long journeys he was dealing with people from different nations. He heard many things different from his beliefs and established doctrines. Christians and Jews, known those days to be the “People of the Book”, changed many ideas he had about idols and the life of Arabs.

### Signs of Change

After a long journey to Damascus, Uthman returned to Makkah to find it amid turmoil. All the people were speaking of Muhammad bin Abdullah. The man had presented himself to them as the Prophet of Islam and brought them new ideas and precepts that they had never heard of. Uthman knew Muhammad صلی اللہ علیہ وسالہ وآلہ وسالہ very well and was well aware of his very good personality and excellent morals. So, he did not oppose the new religion like other chiefs of the Quraish tribe did. On many occasions during his travels, Uthman heard the Jewish and Christian scholars talk about the coming of a new Prophet in the land of Arabia. Uthman was always thinking about the

Prophet ﷺ who would change the life of the Arabs and take them out of the gloomy life that they were leading, into a life of knowledge and guidance. After some thought, Uthman made his way straight to his friend Abu Bakr's house to find out more about the new religion. Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه was very close to the Prophet ﷺ and he had already accepted Islam. Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه told Uthman that Islam called people to worship Allāh Alone, and to give up the worship of false idols. He asked Uthman with a firm tone:

"What are these idols that your people worship? Are they not just stones that can neither hear nor see, and can neither bring good nor harm to anyone?"

'Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه urged Uthman to accept Islam, the true religion of Allāh, and to give up the false worship of idols. Uthman knew in his heart that Islam was the true religion of Allāh and so he accepted the invitation and immediately embraced Islam. He was one of the few early Muslims. Uthman was a young man full of spirit. He went to Muhammad ﷺ and declared his submission to the new religion.

## Suffering for His Belief

Muslims were facing huge hardships at the hands of pagans. Like any person embracing Islam, Uthman رضي الله عنه was also exposed to oppression. His uncle, Al Hakam bin Abi Al-'Aas, was very angry that Uthman رضي الله عنه had abandoned the religion of his forefathers. He tied him up and told him that he would not let him free until he would go back to his old religion. Uthman رضي الله عنه suffered for several days, but he stayed steadfast to his beliefs. He told his uncle very clearly that he would never abandon Islam. Eventually, when his uncle realized that Uthman رضي الله عنه would never submit to his will, he set him free. Since the day Uthman رضي الله عنه accepted Islam, he always kept close to the Prophet ﷺ supporting the new religion and defending the new light of guidance. He did everything he could to defend Islam and never gave in to the Quraish's torture and oppression. Muslims were subjected to all types of torture. Some of them were even killed for embracing Islam. Uthman رضي الله عنه was one of the first people to migrate to Abyssinia, followed by the other Muslims who were being harassed by the Quraish to abandon Islam.



## **Migration to Abyssinia**

Uthman ﷺ was married to the Prophet's daughter named Ruqayah رضي الله عنها. Uthman ﷺ took his wife and left to Abyssinia to escape the oppression of the Quraish. Upon arrival there, Uthman ﷺ and the other Muslims tried to live in peace and worship Allâh as they wished.

The Quraish chiefs were angry to see the Muslims leave Makkah and escape their control and tyranny. They attempted all ways to prevent the Muslims from leaving Makkah, but all their efforts were unsuccessful. The Quraish chiefs discussed ways to have the Muslims brought back to Makkah. Some of them were trading with Abyssinia. They knew the Emperor (Najashi) personally. They thought that sending some presents to the Emperor would help them get their slaves and relatives who had escaped their torture back to Makkah.

Abu Sufyan and others suggested that they should send 'Amr bin Al-'Aas to Al-Najashi to get the Muslims back to Makkah. 'Amr bin Al-'Aas knew Al-Najashi very well. They were friends.

The Quraish collected nice gifts to be presented to

the Emperor and urged 'Amr bin Al-'Aas to use his friendship with the Emperor to realize their objectives.

'Amr bin Al-'Aas arrived in Abyssinia and sought to meet the Emperor. He set a plot to make the Emperor expel the migrants from his land or even surrender them to the Quraish. Upon meeting the Emperor, 'Amr presented to him the gifts sent by the Quraish which the Emperor liked very much. The Emperor asked 'Amr if he could offer him any help.

'Amr took the chance to ask the Emperor to question the migrants who sought protection in his land. He said that they had left the religion of their people and followed a strange religion that was neither idol worshipping nor Christianity. The Emperor ordered the migrants to come to his court. He asked their leader, Ja'far bin Abi Tâlib ﷺ about the allegations made against them. Ja'far advanced to the middle of the court and said:

"We were people of bad morals and faith. We worshipped idols of stone. We treated our neighbours in an evil way. We lived as such until a man from among us declared that he was

ordered by Allâh to take us out of this darkness of morals and thought. We believed in him but our people did not leave us alone. They oppressed us, tortured us and left us no chance to worship Allâh as we wished. We, therefore, resorted to your land for we knew you were just and merciful."

The envoy of the Quraish felt that the response made by Ja'far ﷺ impressed the Emperor. He wanted to make another plot. He told the Emperor that the Muslims said bad things about Jesus Christ. The Emperor asked Ja'far ﷺ about their views of Jesus Christ. Ja'far ﷺ began reciting some Verses of *Surat Maryam*. He saw tears going down the cheeks of the Emperor and his court men. When he finished reciting, the Noble Qur'ân, the Emperor confirmed that the words recited by Ja'far ﷺ were the same ones preached by Jesus Christ. He dismissed 'Amr bin Al-'Aas and gave him back his presents. He told the migrants that they were free to live in his land and that no one would dare cause them any harm. So, Uthman ﷺ and the other migrants were very happy to have the Emperor on their side. They lived in peace in Abyssinia until they all emigrated to Al-Madinah.

## **Uthman ﷺ in Al-Madinah**

As days went by, Islam was gaining more and more power and the number of Muslims was increasing. However, life in Makkah was becoming more and more difficult for Muslims as the Quraish were subjecting them to all kinds of oppression and torture.

### **New Plots Against the Muslims**

Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia received news that the Prophet ﷺ and the Quraish reached an agreement, and life in Makkah was better. Some of them left Abyssinia back to Makkah. However, they found that the information they had received was false. When they came back to Makkah they found that the situation was much worse than before. Some of them were caught by the pagans and were treated with cruelty.

### **Hunger and Deprivation**

After the Prophet's uncle Abu Tâlib died, the Quraish began plotting to kill the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Tâlib was the Prophet's only support, thus

after his death, life became more difficult in Makkah. The Quraish decided to impose a boycott on the Muslims and Bani Hashim, the clan of the Prophet ﷺ. They cut all social, economic and familial relations with Muslims. They even isolated them in a valley to deprive them of any help from outside. Uthman ؓ was among the Muslims isolated by the Quraish, but he did his best to ease the distress. He ordered his agents to buy food and bring it secretly to the Muslims. For three long years the Muslims suffered a lot from hunger.

### Emigration to Al-Madinah

Out of His great mercy, Allâh wanted to help the Muslims. Some people came to visit the Ka'bah from Al-Madinah, which at that time was known as Yathrib. These people accepted Islam and promised to help and support the Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ wanted to save the lives and faith of his Companions, so he asked them to emigrate to Al-Madinah, where they would be protected from the evil plots of the Quraish. Uthman ؓ married the Prophet's daughter Ruqayah, who was divorced by 'Utba bin Abi

Lahab. Abu Lahab was the Prophet's uncle. He was a bitter enemy of Islam. He wanted to threaten the Prophet ﷺ, so he asked his son Utba to divorce Ruqayah. Uthman ؓ asked to marry her and the Prophet ﷺ agreed to give her in marriage to his Companion. Both Uthman and Ruqayah رضي الله عنهما, along with the other Muslims migrated to Al-Madinah. They were both known to be the best husband and wife. When they got to Al-Madinah, they built a small house for themselves and lived together in peace. Many of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ spent their money helping the Muslims, but the way of Uthman ؓ spending his money was very well known.

### Spending Money for Allâh's Sake

Muslims were very poor in Al-Madinah. They had left all their property and flocks in Makkah. Their supporters in Al-Madinah shared with them all their resources. A Jew owned a well from which he sold water to the inhabitants of Al-Madinah at high prices. The inhabitants complained to the Prophet ﷺ about the high prices that the Jew was charging. When Uthman

heard their complaint, he felt very sorry for the Muslims. So, he decided to do something to solve the problem. He immediately went to the Jew and offered him a high price for the well. The Jew, however, refused to sell the whole well and offered to sell half the well to Uthman ﷺ. The supply of water was divided between the two parties on a daily basis. Uthman ﷺ would use the well one day and the Jew would use it the next day. Uthman ﷺ asked the Muslims to take enough water for two days. So, when it was the Jew's day to sell water, no one was going to him to buy water. At last the Jew sold the second half of the well to Uthman ﷺ.

### More Challenges

During the second year after the Muslims had emigrated to Al-Madinah, the Makkans gathered a huge army and headed towards Al-Madinah to put an end to Islam. When the Muslims heard of the army coming to destroy their religion, they too gathered an army of three hundred men. Both armies met at Badr, a place

near Al-Madinah. Uthman ﷺ was not able to take part in this battle of Islam against the disbelievers because his wife Ruqayah رضي الله عنها was ill. The Prophet ﷺ asked him to stay behind and care for her. So, Uthman ﷺ stayed behind and looked after his ill wife. However, Ruqayah رضي الله عنها died a few days later.

### The Man with Two Lights (*Dhun Nurain*)

Uthman ﷺ was very saddened by the death of Ruqayah رضي الله عنها. Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ asked Uthman ﷺ to marry his daughter Hafsa رضي الله عنها. Uthman ﷺ did not accept Umar's offer because he knew that the Prophet ﷺ wished to marry her. After a while, the Prophet ﷺ asked Uthman ﷺ to marry his second daughter Umm Kulthum رضي الله عنها who was also divorced by the second son of Abu Lahab. Uthman ﷺ accepted the Prophet's offer and the couple lived very happily together. Since that day, Uthman ﷺ was named as the man with two lights, meaning the two daughters of the Prophet ﷺ.

## Defiant and Brave

In the sixth year after emigration to Al-Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ decided to perform pilgrimage. With one thousand four hundred Muslims in pilgrims' dress, Uthman رضي الله عنه left to Makkah to perform pilgrimage. On the way, the Muslims learnt that the Quraish would not let them enter the city. At last, the Muslims reached a place called Hudaybiyah. They camped there. The Prophet ﷺ sent a messenger to the Makkans to convince them that the Muslims only wanted to perform the pilgrimage and had not the slightest intent to fight. However, the messenger was treated badly and returned without any success. The Prophet ﷺ then wanted to send someone who was highly respected by the Quraish. Uthman رضي الله عنه was selected because of his kinship with the powerful Umayyad family. The Makkans, however, detained him for three days and news reached the Muslim camp that he had been killed. Without exception, all the one thousand four hundred Muslims gave a pledge that they would stand or fall together to avenge

Uthman's murder. Such a pledge pleased Allâh and the Prophet ﷺ, soon it was known that the news of Uthman's murder was false.

## The Unique Example of Sacrifice

During the time of the Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims had so much love for Islam that they would race one another in doing good deeds and making sacrifices for the religion of Allâh. However, none of them could excel Uthman رضي الله عنه except Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه. Uthman رضي الله عنه was a true and generous believer. He was so keen to please Allâh that he would sometimes sacrifice all his trade and property for the support of Islam. Uthman رضي الله عنه was so generous that he would give out of his money to all those around him.

As soon as the Prophet ﷺ entered Al-Madinah, he built a small mosque. This mosque was not like any other mosque. It was a place where the Muslims could gather for prayer, prepare for *Jihâd* (fighting disbelievers) and discuss the affairs of the Muslim community. As more and more people accepted Islam, the

mosque became too small for the Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ was looking for someone to help expand the mosque. As soon as Uthman ؓ knew of this, he immediately went to the owner of the house beside the Mosque. He asked him to sell the house to him. The owner of the house asked for a high price. Uthman ؓ paid the price. He went to the Prophet ﷺ and told him that he would like to give the house to expand the Mosque. The Prophet ﷺ accepted the offer and was very pleased with Uthman ؓ.

In the ninth year after Hijrah, the Prophet ﷺ received news that the Romans were plotting to disrupt the state of Islam. The Romans wished to destroy the new emerging state of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ wanted to show the Romans that they were not so weak as to be taken easily. The Muslims suffered that particular year of reduced crops. The summer was very hot and resources were limited. Most of the Muslims were poor. They did not have enough resources to meet such a powerful army. The Prophet ﷺ, however, urged his Companions to prepare for the battle, which seemed an impossible task in the middle of the hot summer. The Muslims began preparing for the battle. The rich Companions of

the Prophet ﷺ tried their best to equip the army. Women, on the other hand, began collecting their scarce jewelry to help the Muslims prepare for this battle.

Hundreds of soldiers were ready to go to the battlefield, but they were short of horses, camels and even swords and spears. The Prophet ﷺ urged his Companions to donate as much as they could for the army. He told them that it was a matter of life or death for the new Islamic State. He made a loud and clear announcement:

“Anyone who provides outfits for the soldiers will have all his sins forgiven by Allâh.”

As soon as Uthman ؓ heard these words, he immediately responded to the call and provided all that the army might need. As history books tell:

“Uthman ؓ provided for Tabuk excursion nine hundred and forty camels along with sixty horses.”

Moreover, he brought to the Prophet ﷺ ten thousand dinars, which was at that time a very huge amount of money. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"May Allâh forgive you Uthman for anything you do in public or in secrecy, anything you do till the Day of Resurrection."

This was the way Uthman ﷺ sacrificed for this battle. He offered everything he had to help give the Muslim army power and life. Uthman ﷺ was really trading with Allâh. He was seeking the real forgiveness of Allâh and was looking for a forever-pleasant life in the Hereafter.

### Trading with Allâh

Historians reported that during the rule of Abu Bakr ؓ, people faced great hardships. The land became arid and very few people could find something to eat. The people of Al-Madinah came to Abu Bakr ؓ and asked him to provide them with something that they could survive with.

However, the Caliph could not do anything to help them. The treasury of the state was empty and there was no other means of filling the empty stomachs. As we have already said, Uthman ﷺ, was a rich merchant. He received a huge caravan from Damascus carrying food and other goods. All the merchants gathered

at his house asking him to sell them some of the items he received so that they could sell them to the people. Uthman ﷺ asked them to offer him a good price. The merchants offered high prices, but Uthman ﷺ kept asking for a higher price. He kept telling them that someone had paid him a higher price. When they had offered him the highest price they could, they told him that no merchant could pay more than what they had offered. Uthman ﷺ told them that Allâh had paid him more. For every dirham he had given him ten dirhams. Uthman ﷺ then gave away the whole of the caravan to the poor people of Al-Madinah free of charge.

### Rich but Humble

Anyone would think that a man who had all this wealth could surely have led an easy life. However, Uthman ﷺ spent his wealth on providing food for the people, while he himself would eat vinegar and olive oil. Uthman ﷺ was a man who searched for things that were much greater than worldly pleasures. He was seeking the pleasure of Allâh and an eternal life in Paradise.

## **Uthman ﷺ Elected as the Caliph**

‘Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ, the second Caliph of Islam, was stabbed by a Persian slave named Abu Lu’lu’a. As he was lying on his bed of death, the people around him asked him to appoint a successor. The task was by no means simple, for the small state of Islam had now expanded into an empire. The Persians and Romans received fatal blows and lost large parts of their lands to the Muslims. However, they still formed a threat to the security of the newly founded Islamic State. The internal problems were no less complex. The Muslims had by now become a nation, but some of them were still clinging to tribal customs. The riches brought by conquered lands added to the complexity of the situation. Many Muslims built homes in the conquered lands and stayed there away from the central capital. Islam had come for a different purpose altogether. Its primary aim was not to subdue people, but to guide and reform them. The Caliph to come should protect and promote the religion in addition to his administrative and military responsibilities. These were the problems that ‘Umar ﷺ had to face. He could foresee that by time, these duties and

problems would increase. So, ‘Umar ﷺ left the matter to six prominent Companions of the Prophet ﷺ to elect a new Caliph from amongst themselves. These people were ‘Ali bin Abi Tâlib, Az-Zubair bin Al-Awwam, Abdur- Rahman bin Awf, Uthman bin Affan, Talhah bin Ubeidullah and Sa‘d bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ.

‘Umar ﷺ had directed that the selection of the Caliph should not be delayed beyond the third day after his death. ‘Umar’s last words of advice to them were:

“Fear Allâh during your rule of people and be just to all.”

The six persons met but two days were wasted in unsuccessful attempts to select the Caliph. Abdur- Rahman bin Awf offered to forego his own claim if the others agreed to abide by his decision. All persons agreed to this proposal. So all of them left the matter of electing the new ruler to Abdur- Rahman bin Awf ﷺ after lengthy discussions with senior Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and the final two candidates, Ali ﷺ and Uthman ﷺ, Abdur- Rahman bin Awf ﷺ preferred Uthman ﷺ to ‘Ali ﷺ. ‘Uthman bin Affan ﷺ was finally elected as the

new Caliph. At that time, Muslims had become very powerful and rich and Islam began to spread east, north and south. As soon as he was appointed a Caliph, Uthman ﷺ sent a number of letters to his governors and others which indicated the policies he proposed to adopt in governing the state. He told the governors:

“Allāh has ordered rulers to become protectors of the society and not to become tax collectors. You should take interest in the affairs of Muslims. Even with your enemies your conduct should be upright.”

He also wrote to the commanders of armies saying:

“You are the protectors of Islam against its enemies. You should always be mindful of your conduct.”

### Conquests under Uthman ﷺ

The conquests made by Umar ﷺ in Iraq and Iran had shaken the Persian Empire, but had not destroyed it. There were still some lands in their hands. Some of the lands taken by the Muslims rebelled after the death of Umar ﷺ. Uthman

directed Al-Waleed bin Uqbah ﷺ, the governor of Kufah in Iraq, to take steps against them. Al-Waleed ﷺ attacked Azerbaijan and its people agreed to pay the tribute again. He sent a force under the command of Salman ﷺ to Armenia, but because of its difficult terrain it could not be completely conquered. The same year, the people of the Ray in Iran had revolted, but they were overpowered by Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari ﷺ. Likewise, there was an uprising in Alexandria, Egypt, which was also put down.

Al-Waleed ﷺ was ordered by Uthman ﷺ to send ten thousand soldiers to Syria under the command of Salman ﷺ to defeat the Romans who attacked the Muslim frontiers. As a result, the Romans lost some of their fortresses. Following their success, the Muslims conquered Asia Minor and established contacts with their forces on the Persian side. From there they went as far as Teflis and to the shores of the Black Sea. In Egypt, Abdullah bin Abi As-Sarh ﷺ carried his arms along the coast beyond Tripoli and Barca and threatened Carthage and the far west. He was met by a huge Roman army. He sent a letter to Uthman ﷺ asking for reinforcements. Uthman ﷺ sent ten

thousand men under the command of Abdullah bin Az-Zubair ﷺ. The outcome of this battle was going to determine the fate of the whole African coast. Uthman ﷺ promised a personal reward of one fifth of the share of the state in the spoils of war. On the other side, the Romans declared a reward of one thousand pounds to anyone killing the Muslim leader. Historians place this battle as the third in magnitude after Qadisiyah and Yarmouk. The Roman Leader was killed by Abdullah bin Az-Zubair and the Muslim army gave the Romans a big blow.

As the Islamic State had reached seas and oceans everywhere, there was a great need to establish a fleet of ships in order to help armies cross to the capital of the Byzantine Empire and to spread Islam to Africa and Europe. Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan y, the governor of Syria, was very eager to establish the fleet. He asked the former Caliph, Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ, to permit him to build a naval force, but Umar ﷺ did not give him permission. Uthman ﷺ finally gave him the permission. The first fleet was equipped in the year 28<sup>th</sup> after *Hijrah* under

the command of Abu Qais ﷺ. The fleet was joined by Abdullah bin Abi As-Sarh ﷺ with other ships manned by Egyptian and Arab warriors. The fleet advanced upon Cyprus which was easily conquered and a large number of men were made captives. On the day of victory, Abu Ad-Darda'a ﷺ, a great Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, burst into tears. Someone asked him the reason for shedding tears, instead of feeling happy and joyful over the event. He replied:

"These Cypriots were rulers but when they disobeyed Allâh and ignored His teachings, they were reduced to the state you see now."

The Byzantines made large preparations to regain their losses. Three years after the fall of Cyprus they gathered a fleet of five to six hundred war ships and attacked the Muslims at sea. Abdullah bin Abi As-Sarh ﷺ took the challenge, and with a force much less in number and equipment, but manned by brave warriors could defeat the Byzantines. Before the battle took place, the Muslims spent the whole night in

prayers and recitation of Qur'ân while the Greeks kept on chiming their bells. In the morning, the Greeks could not withstand the Muslims' attack and fled. Under the rule of Uthman ﷺ, Muslims expanded the Islamic State in every direction. Many of the inhabitants of the conquered lands accepted Islam. Those who kept their religions were treated justly and mercifully.



## Virtues and Morals of Uthman ﷺ

### Collection of the Noble Qur'ân

During the rule of Uthman ﷺ, many nations accepted the religion of Islam. They spoke different languages and dialects. In addition, dialects began affecting the standard Arabic language. Uthman ﷺ was very keen to keep the language of the Qur'ân as it had purely been revealed from Allâh. He was worried when he realized that the people throughout the parts of the empire were reading the Qur'ân in different dialects. Uthman ﷺ had all the copies of the Qur'ân available at the time collected. He then chose four prominent Companions and got them to compile the Qur'ân in the dialect of the Quraish. Upon completing the job, Uthman ﷺ sent a copy to each side of the empire and ordered them to destroy any other copies of the Qur'ân.

### Simplicity

Uthman's life, even after becoming the Caliph, was simple. Although he was one of the richest merchants of Makkah, he did not indulge

in pleasures or luxury. He used to take simple food and to put on neat but simple clothes. He also used to do his personal work himself.

### Generosity

Uthman's generosity was unlimited. Before assuming the office of the Caliphate, he always helped the Islamic movement by his wealth and bounty. On two special occasions, he proved to be the most generous man on earth at that time. On the first occasion, he equipped the major part of the Muslim army heading to Tabuk and on the second, he distributed all his caravan to the poor and needy and refused to sell it to merchants for high prices. Uthman ﷺ used to give alms and charity freely and to look after widows and orphans. It was his custom to free a slave every Friday. During his period of rule, he did not take any salary for the position.

### Patience and Endurance

His patience was unparalleled. In all the hardships he met during his rule, he never lost

his poise and tranquility. He resigned himself completely to the Decree of Allâh. His trust in Allâh was unshakable and he acted without concern for his personal safety.

### Fear of Allâh

Fear of Allâh guided Uthman's actions. He was always mindful of death, the grave and reckoning on the Day of Judgment. He used to repeat the Prophet's saying:

"The grave is the first step of the life beyond. If one could pass this stage successfully, other stages would be rendered easy. But if it proved difficult, all other stages would be difficult."

### Love of the Prophet ﷺ

Uthman ﷺ loved the Prophet ﷺ dearly. He followed the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ exactly and took them as a source of guidance. He had great regard for the members of the Prophet's family. As a Caliph, he doubled the allowance of the Prophet's widows.

## **The Rebellion and the End**

As the Islamic state expanded greatly under the rule of Uthman ﷺ, many hypocrites who pretended to have accepted Islam worked out plots to disrupt the Muslim nation and destroy the state. They tried all means to make people revolt against Uthman ﷺ. They told people lies about the wealth of Uthman ﷺ and his relatives. Some rebels started moving the still waters here and there. Finally, they gathered thousands against Uthman ﷺ. Although he had the power to stop them and put an end to their plots, he refused all consultations to wage a war against the rebels. Uthman ﷺ was eighty-two years old at that time. He did not like to shed blood. He was always known to be bashful and merciful. He did not expect the people to revolt against him. However, he knew that the Jews were behind the intrigue.

### **Accusations against Uthman ﷺ**

Near the end of Uthman's rule, the move of rebellion in Kufah and Egypt was about to end in

turmoil. The enemies of the Caliph began to talk loosely that the Caliph was not following the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ and the preceding Caliphs.

Few people realized the bad consequences of such talks and rumors. In fact, Uthman ﷺ did several things that the rebels took as a false evidence against him. They said that he erected tents in Mina as a shelter during *Hajj* time, the thing which had not been done before. Indeed, the Muslim army used these tents in Mina when they saw other armies using them. It was something trivial to rely on to kill a Caliph. These tents were meant to protect Muslims against the scorching sun. The second allegation of the rebels was that at the time of the Prophet ﷺ and the first two Caliphs, *Zakât* was not levied on horses, while Uthman ﷺ levied *Zakât* on horses.

The fact is that horses had been few and used only in warfare at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. After the wealth that the Muslims gained,

Uthman ﷺ saw it was proper to levy *Zakât* on horses as on camels. Many other accusations were made against Uthman ﷺ. The hypocrite Abdullah bin Saba', originally a Jew pretending to have become a Muslim, poured oil on the fire. He did his best to gain his objective, which was to destroy Islam and the Muslim State. He made an allegiance with other governors who were discontent with Uthman ﷺ and the trouble moved to Al-Madinah. However, all those lies against Uthman ﷺ could not change him.

He continued to be a merciful and lenient governor. Even during the time he was attacked by his opponents who wanted to kill him, he did not use the funds of the treasury to spend on those who would guard his house. His enemies told the people that Uthman ﷺ gave more power to his relatives who in turn abused their positions and oppressed those under their rule. The opposition grew to the extent that it spread all over the state of Islam. The people that began all the plotting against him surrounded his house and encouraged people to kill him. Many of his advisors asked him to try putting a stop to the riot

but he did not. At last, his opponents entered into his house and killed him while he was reciting the Qurân. They opened his cabinet to take the money they had falsely accused him of collecting for his relatives. However, they found a box in which there was a piece of paper that said:

“This is Uthman’s testimony before Allâh: In the Name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Uthman bin Affan ﷺ bears witness that there is no true deity but Allâh and that Muhammad is Allâh’s Messenger. Paradise is true and Hell is true, and Allâh will resurrect everyone on the Day of Judgment, for Allâh will never break His promise. He lives by that, dies with that and resurrects believing in that.”

His body was kept inside his house for three days until the people of Al-Madinah could bury it. May Allâh be pleased with Uthman ﷺ for the great services he rendered to Islam and Muslims. It was enough for Uthman ﷺ to be

praised by the Prophet ﷺ:

“Uthman رضي الله عنه is bashful to the extent that angels get bashful when they see him.”



“When you get older, always remember Uthman’s generosity and morals. You should read his story to your friends and follow his example in piety and bashfulness.



## عثمان بن عفان ﷺ

— ثالث الخلفاء الراشدين —



Uthman bin Affan ﷺ was one of the early men who accepted Islam in Makkah. From the first moment he became a Muslim, he put all his wealth under the service of Islam. He spent most of his resources to satisfy the needs of poor Muslims. Recognizing his generosity and devotion to Islam, the Prophet ﷺ told him that his place would be in Paradise on the Hereafter. He married Ruqayah ﷺ, the Prophet's daughter. After she died, he married her sister Um Kulthum ﷺ; for that, the people at that time called him *Dhun Nurain*, "The Man with the Two Lights."